

When My Mind is Renewed, Part 2 - Romans 12:18 – March 24th, 2013

- Today's teaching will be part two of a series I've titled; "When My Mind is Renewed."
- As we near the end of this amazing chapter in the Epistle of Romans, it's becoming abundantly clear that Paul has raised the bar too high.
- By that I mean, there is absolutely no way that we could ever hope to live the life that he describes if we try in the energy of our own flesh.

- In other words, from verse nine on through to the end of the chapter Paul's list is such that it is impossible for us to do by human standards.
- By way of example being sincere, good, devoted, loving, honoring, full of zeal, joyful, hopeful, patient and hospitable are just the beginning.
- Then, what follows are seemingly even more difficult, and it's evidenced by what the Apostle Paul says in verses sixteen and seventeen.

1. I'll live in harmony with others (Verse 16)

- Paul says we're to live in harmony with each other, and not be proud and conceited, but willing to associate with those in low positions.

2. I'll do what's right by others (Verse 17)

- v17 Paul writes how that we're not to repay anyone with evil when we've been the recipients of evil, but to do what's right by everybody.

3. I'll live at peace with others (Verse 18)

- (18) If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

- v18 He says that, if it is possible, and as far as it depends on us, we are to live at peace with everyone, in as much as we are able to do so.
- Now the key qualifier here is, "if it is possible," which would indicate that there are going to be those times where it's just impossible to do it.

Charles Spurgeon - "Some people will quarrel, and it is barely possible to keep upon good terms with them. In their case we must do our best, and if, after all, we cannot live peaceably with them, it will be fortunate for us if we can move off and live without them."

- Here's the problem, this not only implies that there may be times when it's impossible, it also implies that there are times when it's possible.
- Actually, I'll take it a step further and submit, whether we like it or not, there are probably more times when it's possible than when it's not.
- If this is true, and I believe that it is, then the question becomes, if everything here-to-fore is virtually impossible, how can this be possible?

- The answer lies in the first two verses of the chapter, namely, verse two where we're told that it comes by way of the renewing of our mind.
- Absent the first two verses being the real deal in my life, it is virtually impossible for these last verses to ever be the experience of my life.
- Perhaps better said if I don't offer my body as a living sacrifice not conforming to this world then a renewed mind is impossible by His Word.

- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the biggest reasons our Christian walk doesn't match our talk, this would have to be it.
- Let me explain, if I don't get this right at the root, then there's never going to be any fruit and as such I'll be forced to manufacture fake fruit.
- However, I may not even do that, in that, instead of trying to fake it, I'll just give up on it, under the banner of the Christian life doesn't work.

Roy Hession, best known as the author of The Calvary Road, wrote of this in another of his books, Forgotten Factors. Here's what he had to say, "This fact is extremely dangerous and that from two points of view. If a Christian cannot "get the victory" (as the saying goes) he may be tempted to say, "What is the use of being a Christian at all?" and giving up his profession altogether, go back into the world. Perhaps that is the rationale behind some cases of backsliding – not that the world is so attractive, but that the person concerned cannot "make the Christian life work" and so gives up. On the other hand, he may settle for something less than the best and rationalize these things. ... If [this] ...is really true ...we need not look any further for the reason for the lack of revival in our churches: everybody is play-acting..."

- I point this out because one of my greatest fears when preaching a sermon is that we'll all leave church having only heard another sermon.
- Some of us may have even taken notes and vowed to do that which they heard God speak to them about in the sermon that was preached.
- Others of us may do pretty good for a while by living in harmony with others, doing what's right by others, and being at peace with others.

- However, it's only a matter of time before we give up and toss in the towel, this because there wasn't a renewing of the mind to begin with.
- Right about now you may be asking yourself how is it that I can renew my mind. Simply put this renewing comes vis-à-vis the Word of God.
- More specifically, when I offer myself as a living sacrifice, submitting myself to God's Word and God's will then He will in turn transform me.

- By way of illustration, the water of God's Word cleanses and renews my mind so I will begin to think in a whole new way nay, in a Holy way.
- To borrow a computer metaphor, sometimes you need to reboot, especially if you own a PC, and when you do, programs work like new.
- Often times, when files become corrupted, you will have to do a new, fresh install of the operating system, which wipes out the hard drive.

- So too is this true with the computer of our minds, we need to have a new install, and wipe out the hard drive of conforming to this world.
- Once we do, we don't crash as often, and even if we do, God's grace is right there to meet us and forgive us as the God of new beginnings.
- I'll bring today's sermon to a close by suggesting, God would never be so cruel as to have Paul write this list if it were only pie in the sky.

- The truth of the matter is, it's the opposite that's true in the sense that, we're God to do that, He would become party to our disobedience.
- In other words, if He commanded us or promised us something that was impossible to do or have, He would, in effect, set us up to sin.
- God won't do that because God can't do that, and God can't do that because it goes against the nature of both, Who He is, and how He is.